



global warming

www.house.gov/cleaver/gw.html

After years of overwhelming scientific evidence and real-world observations, it's clear that global warming is an urgent problem that requires action now. While future technologies may arrive that make a transition away from a fossil fuel-based economy easier, we do not have to wait for them. The fundamental scientific, technical, and industrial knowledge base already exists that can begin solving our global warming challenge.

In 2007, Congressman Cleaver was appointed to the Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming. This unique committee was established by Speaker Nancy Pelosi to add urgency and resources to the commitment of this Congress to address the challenges of America's oil dependence and the threat of global warming. Please take a moment to visit the Committee's website to learn about how these issues are impacting America and the world, and what you can do to help solve these twin challenges.

Do your part to reduce Global Warming

The most important thing you can do to help fight climate change is call on your elected officials to enact policies that will help solve it. However, you can save money and reduce your own contribution to global warming by making climate-friendly choices each day. Here are a few simple tips for living a more climate-friendly life:

At Home

* Turn down the heat and air conditioning when you aren't home. Try using a programmable thermostat or setting your thermostat yourself to 68 degrees while you are awake and lower it to 60 degrees while you are asleep or away from home. In the summer, keep the thermostat at 78 degrees while you are at home, but give your air conditioning a rest when you are away. This will allow you to save about 10% a year on your home energy costs. If every house in America did this, our total greenhouse gas production would drop by

about 35 million tons of CO₂. This is about the same as taking 6 million cars off of the road.

* Choose energy efficient appliances. Because they use less energy, EnergyStar appliances like refrigerators can reduce carbon pollution, and have a big impact on your energy bill. Plus, choosing energy efficient products is easy -- just look for the EnergyStar logo. EnergyStar products typically exceed the federal energy standards by at least fifteen percent. When buying appliances that use the most energy in your home, like heaters, air conditioners, water heaters and refrigerators, also use the Energy Guide card posted on the appliance to help you choose the one with the lowest annual energy consumption.

* Warm up your home with insulation. Was your house constructed before 1980? If so, it could be one of the 80% of American homes built without enough insulation. This means your home heating costs could be going through the roof, literally. * Change your home's air filters. Heating and cooling uses about half of the energy in a typical home and can account for about \$1,500 a year in annual costs.

* Make the switch to compact florescent bulbs. According to the government's EnergyStar program, if every American home replaced their five most-used light fixtures with EnergyStar rated compact fluorescent the savings would add up to \$8 billion annually in energy costs. That's like taking almost ten million cars off the road. CFL's are widely available, affordable, and they last ten times longer than traditional bulbs.

* Wash your clothes with cold water. If you usually use hot water for your laundry you can cut your energy consumption in half by choosing warm water, and up to ninety percent if you choose cold. Your current liquid laundry detergent should work fine. If not, special cold water detergents are available. Your shirts and pants should be just as clean, and you'll thank yourself when the electricity bill arrives.



* Switch to green power. It is likely that most of the electricity you use comes from non-renewable sources like coal. However, there are some utilities that will sell you climate-friendly electricity like wind, biomass, or solar if you ask for it. More than 750 utilities in 37 states offer green power products and signing up can be very easy. To find out what your options are, check out the US Department of Energy map or contact your local energy company directly. And, when you sign up for green power, ask your utility when everyone will be getting clean energy, even those who don't request it. Read more about green power here. For more ways to save energy at home, visit EPA's Energy Star @ home tips.

On the Go

* Take public transportation. One of the best ways to reduce your impact on the climate is to take a public bus, subway or train instead of driving. Since you don't have to keep your eyes on the road, you can read, talk with friends or listen to music while you travel. If just 10% of US passenger car travel were instead on mass transit, we would save 75 million tons of CO₂. Give public transit a try for one trip a week to start. You may be surprised by how convenient reducing greenhouse gas emissions can be. If your community doesn't have many public transportation options, ask for it! Go to a city council meeting or write your city officials and tell them that good public transportation options are important to you, and good for the community.* Find a carpool buddy at least once a week. Sharing a ride to work is one of the most efficient ways to cut down on drive-time emissions. Ask around -- odds are someone else is heading in the same direction already.

* Pump up your tires. Eager to save money at the pump? According to AAA, driving with under-inflated tires can hurt your vehicle's gas mileage by two to three percent. Over a year, this could be like wasting an entire tank of gas. To check your tires' pressure:1. Check the inside of the driver's side door or owner's manual and jot down the double-digit

number followed by the letters "PSI," which stands for Pounds per Square Inch. This is how much air your tires were designed to hold.2. Pick up a tire gauge (for about \$5) and use it to measure the air in your tires.3. If it turns out your tires are under-inflated, visit a gas station for an air touch-up and you'll enjoy an easier (and more energy-efficient) ride.

* Go ride a bike -- or take a walk. Not only is riding a bike or walking a climate-friendly way to commute, it's good for your health, too. Ride your bike to work, or use it for short errands. Your local bike shop is an excellent resource for information on bicycle commuting, the latest bike gadgets and safety tools, and it can even help you fix up that old three-speeder for trips around town.

At Work

* Use the sleep settings and the power switch for computers and monitors. These common pieces of home and office equipment consume a lot of electricity. The single most powerful climate change tool on these machines is the OFF switch. Forget what you've heard about how powering up equipment repeatedly wears it out. That's old information, dating back decades. Equipment can be safely switched off and powered back on when it's needed again. Also, make sure the hibernation and sleep settings are enabled.

* Ask for motion sensors in low-traffic areas. In commercial buildings lighting accounts for more than 40% of electrical energy use, a huge cause of greenhouse gas production. Using motion and occupancy sensors can cut this use by 10%. Ask your employer to consider installing motion sensors in lesser traveled hallways, restrooms, conference rooms, and storage areas.

* Use a power strip. Office equipment from faxes to toaster ovens draw energy just by being plugged in. Save energy by plugging all office equipment into a power strip. When you leave the office, just flip the off switch on the power strip. You can also use a power strip at home and save even more.* Call maintenance if it's cold. If it's too hot or too cold, call the maintenance department since this probably means that the system needs to be adjusted (and energy is being wasted).